United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1395
18 May 1993

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council meeting at Foreign Ministers level postponed indefinitely pending outcome of consultations on former Yugoslavia; Council President says meeting still expected to convene; Council action on war crimes tribunal expected this week.

+ It is the will and intent of the Security Council and most Cambodians that the election be held as scheduled, and "I have directed that this should be done ", Secretary-General says in new report; warns that election, beginning Sunday, might be marred by "continuing violence" although UNTAC has done everything possible to ensure maximum security.

+ Need for programmes to enable young people to make informed choices in sexual and related matters, stressed in planning Committee for 1994 Population and Development Conference.

+ Problems of land-locked and transit developing countries discussed with donor countries for first time at three-day meeting at Headquarters.

* * *

The meeting of the Security Council at the level of Foreign Ministers, which had been scheduled for Friday, 21 May, has been postponed, according to a statement read out today by Council President Yuliy Vorontsov (Russian Federation). At present, he said, intensive consultations were taking place between Foreign Ministers of several Member States of the Security Council on various aspects of the conflict in former Yugoslavia. A definite date for the meeting would be set later pending those discussions, he said.

Speaking later with correspondents, Mr. Vorontsov stressed that the meeting was "very much on". Asked how many countries had been "against" the meeting as originally scheduled, he replied "more than two".

Muhamed Sacirbey, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations, warned against creating safe havens in Bosnia and Herzegovina "without any vision of how to fully implement the Vance/Owen plan". That would "not do much more than create ethnic ghettos", he said. He

(more)

For information media--not an official record

said he would ask for comprehensive measures, not "piecemeal measures", which would only institutionalize and prolong the agony of the Bosnian people.

The United Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sir David Hannay, told correspondents that there appeared to be very firm agreement among all Members of the Council that a decision should be reached this week on setting up a war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

* * *

It is clear that it is the will and intent of the Security Council and of the vast majority of the Cambodian people that the election be held as scheduled. With this in view, "I have directed that this should be done", Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali says in a new report to the Security Council, dated 15 May.

The Secretary-General warns however that the elections in Cambodia beginning this Sunday are "likely to be affected by continuing violence", although everything possible has been done by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to ensure the maximum security. The UNTAC would therefore be conducting "the most impartial election that is possible in conditions that are not susceptible to its full control", he wrote.

The Secretary-General also expresses concern at the fact that incidents of violence could have a disruptive effect through their "destabilizing psychological effects". Since the inception of UNTAC, 13 civilian and military personnel had lost their lives, and 52 had been wounded as a result of hostile action. In the last two months, 110 Cambodians, including those of Vietnamese descent, had died as victims of violence and some 180 had been injured.

In order to avoid violence, the report said, the number of polling sites had been reduced from 102 to 51. No polling would be conducted in the areas controlled by the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK), where UNTAC was not allowed access anyway, as well as areas in which the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) had been operating.

The Secretary-General's report has been submitted in response to the Security Council's resolution 810 of 3 March, 1993, which called on UNTAC to continue efforts to create a neutral political environment conducive to the holding of free and fair elections, and asked the Secretary-General to report by mid-May. (S/25784)

* * *

There was a fundamental need to ensure the availability of reproductive health systems, education and counselling, to enable adolescents to make informed personal choices in sexual and health-related matters, the planning Committee for the 1993 Population and Development Conference was told this morning.

(more)

Addressing the Committee, Mette Knudsen, the representative of Denmark, said that worldwide, some 500,000 women died annually as a result of childbirth-related causes, the majority in developing countries. Many of those deaths were the result of illegal and unsafe abortions. Ms. Knudsen also stressed the need to address the question of adolescent pregnancy. Adolescents were also at risk for sexually transmitted diseases, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), she said.

Yesterday, the representative of the Holy See, Renato R. Martino, said the statement of the 1984 International Population Conference discounting the importance of abortion as a family planning tool should be retained and emphasized. That Conference had stated that in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning, he noted.

The Committee is currently considering the proposed framework for the final document for the Conference, which will take place in Cairo from 6 to 13 September 1994. It will end its session on Friday, 21 May.

* * *

The problems of land-locked and transit developing countries are being discussed during a three-day meeting, which began yesterday at Headquarters under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). This marks the first time that these countries are meeting in a global forum with donor countries and institutions to discuss cooperative arrangements to improve their conditions.

In an opening statement, Yves Berthelot, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, called on the donor community to give more support to programmes to improve transit facilities and services.

Delegates are examining an UNCTAD report entitled "Transit systems for land-locked developing countries: current situations and proposals for future action". It says that financial aid from donor countries and technical assistance by various agencies have played a key role in developing road and rail infrastructures.

There are currently 28 land-locked developing countries, including seven newly independent States which were formerly part of the Soviet Union. Most of those countries are very poor -- 16 are classified by the United Nations as least developed.

* *** *